

[7th March, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) and (d) The Ministry releases grant to State Government and voluntary organizations after receiving audited statement of expenditure and utilisation certificate of grants released previously.

**Setting up of a National Commission for old people**

1095. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to observe the year 2001 as year of elderly people;

(b) if so, the steps taken and the schemes introduced to ameliorate the pitiable conditions of this section of society;

(c) whether Government propose to set up a National commission for Old People; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (c) No, Madam.

(b) Does not arise.

(d) The Government has announced a National Policy on Older Persons in the year 1999. This Policy is a comprehensive document covering almost all aspects affecting the life of older persons directly or indirectly. To operationalise the provisions of the Policy, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has already set up a National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) under the Chairpersonship of Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment in May, 1999. The basic objectives of the NCOP are to advice and provide feedback to the Government on implementation of the provisions of the Policy and function as a nodal point to represent the collective opinion of older persons and redressing their grievances. The Ministry has also commissioned AADHAR as the Secretariat for the Council which is being coordinated by a Delhi based NGO called Agewell Foundation. Accordingly, the Government is of the view that a separate National Commission for Older Persons is not necessary at this point of time since the National Council for Older Persons has already been created.